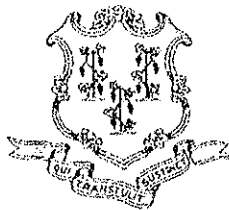


STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERJames M. Thomas
CommissionerLieutenant Edwin S. Henion
Chief of Staff

February 15, 2011

Rep. Stephen Dargan, Co-Chairman
Sen. Joan Hartley, Co-Chairman
Public Safety and Security Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

HB 5341 AN ACT REQUIRING THE COLLECTION OF DNA FROM PERSONS ARRESTED FOR A SERIOUS FELONY

The Department of Public Safety advises the committee that the Forensic Laboratory is understaffed and currently has backlogs of over three years in processing DNA evidence in criminal investigations. This bill will have a significant fiscal impact on the Department of Public Safety's Forensic Laboratory.

This proposed bill would require that DNA samples be taken from persons arrested for serious felonies. This is good public safety policy, but the committee should be aware that it will have significant fiscal impact and the agency's existing statutory responsibilities for DNA are not properly funded.

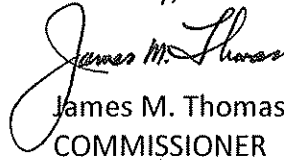
In 2003, the Connecticut General Assembly amended Connecticut General Statute 54—102g to require that all persons convicted of felonies be required to submit to the taking of DNA samples. The Connecticut Department of Public Safety received no additional staffing positions and or funding to acquire and process DNA supplies into the CODIS databank. As a result a backlog in convicted offender samples ensued, culminating in a backlog of over 22,484 unprocessed offender samples in August 2009. The State of Connecticut devoted 1.4 million dollars in American Recovery Re-Investment Justice Assistance Grant Funding to hire 9 durational positions to address this backlog which was eliminated in June 2010. These durational positions have now been diverted to address the criminal backlog of DNA evidence which continues to increase monthly and stands at over three years. Additionally, the ARRA federal grant funding is set to expire in June 2011, jeopardizing the continuation of nine durational positions.

Although the Department of Public Safety finds the expansion of DNA testing for arrested individuals for serious felony arrests highly desirable from a public safety perspective, (the Connecticut Forensic Laboratory in the last year has linked Connecticut convicted felony offenders to over 200 unsolved felony crimes throughout the United States, and additional 100 hits are pending a confirmatory known's), the Connecticut Forensic Laboratory would need substantial additional funding for DNA supplies and general funded positions to sustain this proposal.

Based on 2009 Connecticut Crime Index, there were over 9,175 criminal arrests for serious felonies throughout the State of Connecticut. Assuming this number is relatively constant the Connecticut Forensic Laboratory would need an additional five examiner positions, and one clerical position to process and maintain the index. Based on current wages and fringe rates the Department of Public Safety would need an additional \$590,600 in salary and fringe costs, and \$458,750 in supplies, (it costs approximately \$50 per individual for processing DNA samples). Additionally, the state would need to purchase boucle swab kits and equip all law enforcement agencies in the state; we estimate these costs to be \$45,000 annually.

An additional consideration is the need for a computerized database/network would need to be established to prevent multiple collections from the same individuals and result in duplicate processing. This database would need to be accessible to all collecting agencies in law enforcement, corrections and Judicial, and would require considerable start up time to be established.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James M. Thomas", is written over the printed name and title.

James M. Thomas
COMMISSIONER